

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Cape Wind project slated for Nantucket Sound and your diligence and comprehensiveness in the evaluation and permitting of the project. I was happy to see such a highly favorable draft EIS presented by the Army Corps previously, as I am a strong supporter of this project, and I hope you will find similar conclusions. I would like to add the following comments, which are offered as suggestions to strengthen the Final EIS for the benefit of public understanding of the Cape Wind project.

Protected Marine Mammal Species

While the previous EIS stated that the sound levels anticipated during construction are below the 180 dBL threshold level, I am wondering if it's possible to include the actual sound levels of construction, perhaps using examples of projects past, as well as including decibel levels produced by the vibration of the turbines during routine operation.

Avian Resources

It may be helpful to include bird impact studies from wind farms already in operation, for example the offshore wind farm at the Horns Rev, Denmark, to estimate bird loss, collision, flight pattern changes, etc. In addition, it may be helpful for the general public to put bird impact and loss in perspective with other forms of bird loss, that is, to add the top known offenders that kill no less than 100 million birds annually each: glass windows, automobiles, house cats and hunters, not to mention that the #1 threat to birds is global warming.

Estimated Health Benefit to Wildlife

In addition to the health benefits to humans already addressed in the DEIS, I suggest that you add a section on the estimated health benefits to wildlife. One example is the reduction in bird and shellfish harm due to oil spillage from barges and tankers delivering fuel oil to electrical generation plants that pass through the Cape Cod Canal or in waters off Massachusetts. You might cite the recent oil spill in Cape Cod Canal that killed no less than 450 birds. In addition, the externalities of coal mining impact on habitat in other areas of the U.S. are another area of concern that should be addressed.

Cultural and Recreational Resources/Visual

While I understand that the appearance of a wind farm would constitute an alteration of the historic character and view, again, I think it is important to put these changes in perspective. Electrical wires, telephone poles, airport navigational lights, nighttime football game lights, cell phone towers, and more, are all historical alterations and visual impact that we tolerate. I think it's important that these comparisons be made.

Global Warming

I would like to see a much more comprehensive explanation of global warming, the use and emission of fossil fuels as a contributing factor, and the way in which the wind farm and other renewable energies can offset that. Global warming is causing a rise in sea level that has a direct effect on the Cape & Islands. Nantucket is currently losing land at a rate of at least 6 acres per year according to the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute,

and this does not include land lost to storm damage. This is a very substantial loss, and I think it is significant enough to be included in the report. The #1 contributor to global warming is fuel combustion and carbon dioxide emissions. The wind farm will displace one million tons of carbon dioxide annually. This wind farm is a significant way that we can stem global warming in our region.

Impact on Tourism

The Final EIS should augment its discussion on the impact on tourism by citing the experience of currently operating offshore wind farms in Europe and Canada, and even land based wind farms, such as the one in Palm Springs, California, which draws two tour buses a day. There seems to be an anticipated fear on the Cape & Islands that a wind farm will hurt our ever-needed tourism, and yet evidence is to the contrary. For example, the North Cape Wind Farm on PEI draws 60,000 visitors a year, and with the development of a new wind interpretive center, the goal is to attract 100,000 visitors annually. In fact, the neighbors of the North Cape Wind Farm oppose a new wind project on the eastern side of PEI for fear it will siphon tourists away from their part of the island.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Wasserman
Nantucket